

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAO PAULO 3220

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BR
SUBJECT: CARDINAL ARNS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT INTERNAL PROSPECTS

1. DURING REGULAR COURTESY CALL BY CONGEN AND POLOFF, CARDINAL SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION/LIBERALIZATION PROSPECTS COULD EVOLVE EITHER WAY. SNI CHIEF GEN. JOAO BAPTISTA FIGUEIREDO SEEMED TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE AROUND THE PRESIDENT. BUT ARNS SAID THAT HE HAS ONLY THE WORST INFORMATION ABOUT FIGUEIREDO. "I HAVE HEARD NOTHING GOOD ABOUT HIM. HE REPRESENTS THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE IN POWER. THE SNI IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WORSE ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE 1968. AND MUCH OF THE BLAME FOR THESE ACTIVITIES MUST BE TAKEN BY FIGUEIREDO." ARNS SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN WITH SECOND ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL DILERMANDO GOMES MONTEIRO RECENTLY WHO TOLD HIM THAT FIGUEIREDO HAS NOT BEEN SELECTED AS GEISEL'S CANDIDATE NOR WOULD HE EVER BE CHOSEN AS THE CANDIDATE OR AS PRESIDENT. ARNS TOOK DILERMANDO'S STATEMENTS TO MEAN THAT THERE WAS A STRONG DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IN THE HIGH COMMAND CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION.

2. ARNS SAID THAT HE THOUGHT IT WAS RIGHT TO ENCOURAGE MAGALHAES PINTO'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT
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BELIEVE THAT MAGALHAES HAD A GHOST OF A CHANCE. ARNS STATED THAT MAGALHAES WAS CARRYING ON A COURAGEOUS FIGHT. HIS EFFECT-IVENESS, SAID ARNS, MAY TURN OUT TO BE IN INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION IN WAYS WHICH WILL CAUSE THE GOVERNMENT TO GO FURTHER THAN IT INTENDED IN LIBERALIZATION.

3. ARNS STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS TIGHTENED THE REINS

ON HIS ACTIVITIES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE RECENTLY. HIS WEEKLY NEWS-PAPER, O SAO PAULO, IS BEING CENSORED EVEN MORE SEVERELY. THE PAPER HAD RECEIVED ORDERS TO SUBMIT THE COMPLETE TEXT SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE PUBLICATION, BUT HE HAD ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE EDITORS TO PRETEND THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND. TIME WOULD REVEAL WHETHER THE PAPER COULD GET AWAY WITH SUCH TACTICS. HE HAD BEEN INVITED TO BE INTERVIEWED ON TV CULTURA, THE STATE GOVERNMENT-RUN EDUCATIONAL STATION, ON THE MUCH COMMENTED "VOX POPULI" PROGRAM. AFTER THE QUESTIONS HAD BEEN PREPARED, THREE DAYS BEFORE THE DECEMBER 3 PROGRAM, TV CULTURA CALLED TO SAY THAT IT HAD "TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES" CAUSING THE PROGRAM TO BE RESCHEDULED. HE LEARNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROHIBITED HIS INTERVIEW.

4. A THIRD AREA OF CONFLICT WITH THE GOVERNMENT WAS CAUSED BY THE ARCHDIOCESE'S PASTORAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS PUBLICATION OF A PAMPHLET CALLED "VIOLENCE AGAINST HUMBLE PERSONS." THE PAMPHLET SYSTEMATICALLY PRESENTS THE PATTERN OF POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE, MOSTLY POOR, SUSPECTED OF COMMON CRIMES. THE PAMPHLET CONSTITUTES A STRONG CRITIQUE AGAINST POLICE CONDUCT, THE PRISON , SYSTEM, AND THE OFFICIAL ATTITUDE TOWARD CRIMINALITY ("UP TO WHAT POINT CAN WE THROW A THIEF IN JAIL AS BEING NOXIOUS TO SOCIETY WHEN WE KNOW THAT 80 PERCENT OF THE CRIMES ARE COMMITTED BECAUSE OF NECESSITY, HUNGER AND MISERY?"). ARNS STATED THAT HE IS CONVINCED THAT THE FIGHT FOR IMPROVING HUMAN RIGHTS MUST BE COUCHED IN THE BROADEST

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TERMS IF PROGRESS IS TO BE MADE IN PROTECTING POLITICAL PRISONERS. HE SAID THAT THE POLICE HAVE PICKED UP THE PAMPHLET AND TRIED TO PREVENT ITS DISTRIBUTION. HE WAS EVEN VISITED AT HIS HOME BY TWO AGENTS ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT IT. A FULLER REPORT ON THE PAMPHLET AND COPIES WILL BE SENT BY AIRGRAM.

5. ARNS CONCLUDED THAT HE IS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT LIBERALIZATION. A FRIEND HAD RECENTLY TRAVELLED TO FIVE LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY-RULED COUNTRIES THAT WERE ANNOUNCING LIBERALIZATION. THE PATTERN HE HAD FOUND WAS LIBERALIZATION RHETORIC ACCOMPANIED BY ACTUAL TIGHTENING OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION. ARNS THOUGHT THE PATTERN HELD TRUE FOR BRAZIL.

6. COMMENT: THE CARDINAL WAS MORE DESPONDENT THAN USUAL, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE IS FEELING HEMMED IN BY THE GOVERNMENT. HE WAS AT HIS MOST ANIMATED IN DESCRIBING GEN. DILERMANDO'S CONVERSATION SINCE HE TOOK IT TO IMPLY DIVISIONS IN THE ARMY LEADERSHIP. IN THE DECEMBER 16 PRESS, IN AN UNUSUAL COMMENT ON THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION, DILERMANDO REPORTEDLY STATED THAT THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND DOES NOT CHOOSE THE PRESIDENT, AND NEITHER DOES GEN. GEISEL. THE SELECTION IS MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE AND REFLECTS A CONSENSUS. GIVEN DILERMANDO'S LIBERAL

REPUTATION, THIS STATEMENT WAS CONSIDERED A FAIRLY DIRECT MESSAGE
FOR GEISEL AND THE FIGUEIREDO FORCES.
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Sent Date: 21-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
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